

MM BIO-5k. Implement Mitigation Measures 4e, 4f and 4h—4s. *Implementation of these measures would further reduce the risk of construction and maintenance impacts on the desert tortoise.*

Rationale for Mitigation. These mitigation measures would reduce the potential for direct impacts to the desert tortoise, by identifying locations with the species present, avoidance of burrows and species habitat, and placing of fencing around construction sites to minimize entry of individuals. These measures provide for onsite restoration of species habitat and offsite mitigation for impacts to burrows. Additionally the measures minimize disturbance from noise and dust to the animals during construction. Qualified biologists will ensure that all mitigation is applied in a way to minimize impacts to the desert tortoise.

Impact BIO-6: Potential Impacts on Other Special-Status Amphibian and Reptile Species

Construction and maintenance activities could result in mortality to other special-status amphibian and reptile species. (Potentially Significant, Class II)

Habitat for the yellow-blotched salamander along the ROW occurs primarily in the area of Tehachapi (Cummings Valley) and the Stallion Springs subdivision. This is the only area that contains oak trees and has dead and down material suitable for salamanders. The ROW in this area has been previously disturbed and does not contain oak trees, although it does contain woody debris and rocks. If present, yellow-blotched salamanders could be adversely affected by trenching activities.

The silvery legless lizard, San Joaquin coachwhip, California horned lizard and Mojave fringe-toed lizard could be affected if individuals inhabit specific construction or maintenance locations at the time of disturbance. EPNG would implement the measures provided in Appendix D Protection Measures for Special Status Wildlife and Plants during Construction.

Mitigation for Impact BIO-6:

MM BIO-6a. Fencing Work Areas. *During construction and major maintenance activities, the Applicant would have the option to increase monitoring, such that no area along the trench goes unsurveyed by a qualified biologist for longer than an hour, or to fence the work areas to exclude all species of ground-dwelling wildlife present in the immediate vicinity of the Project.*